DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 126 156 95 TM 005 426

AUTHOR Stow, Debra K.; Milczarek, Gary J.
TITLE Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving: Expert Review.
INSTITUTION Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Basic Skills Group. Learning Div.
PUB DATE Mar 76
CONTRACT NE-C-00-3-0072
NOTE 38p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Conflict; *Conflict Resolution; Formative Evaluation; *Individual Differences; *Problem Solving; *Program Evaluation; Social Relations; Teachers; *Teacher Workshops; Trainers; Training Techniques
IDENTIFIERS Improving Teaching Competencies Program; *Social Conflict Negotiative Problem Solving System

ABSTRACT

A formative review of the Interim Version of the "Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving" system, conducted November 19-21, 1975 in Portland, Oregon is presented. The purposes of the review were to obtain expert opinion on the quality of the system's theoretical base and training materials, and to secure recommendations regarding additional development efforts. Included in this report are an initial summary of results, a description of methodology, and a section on results that presents the issues raised by staff and reviewers, as well as summaries of discussions and recommendations. The system is intended to be a relatively structured, experience-based workshop designed to provide a variety of opportunities to explore situations of social conflict. Participants generally are teachers and/or administrators who meet as strangers or as members of the same organization for a total of six days. The reviewers expressed very positive feelings about the system in general and the review process. They indicated interest in participating in future workshops and being informed of on-going development efforts. The developers felt that the review was very helpful in terms of planning future directions, analyzing some difficult issues, and exploring possible modifications in the system. (RC)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

EVALUATION

IMPROVING TEACHING COMPETENCIES PROGRAM

SOCIAL CONFLICT AND NEGOTIATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING: EXPERT REVIEW

Improving Teaching Competencies Program

Debra K. Stow
Gary J. Milczarek

March 1976

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Portland, Oregon 97204

April 1976

Published by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, a private nonprofit corporation. The work upon which this publication is based was performed pursuant to Contract NE-C-00-3-0072, with the Basic Skills Group/Learning Division of the National Institute of Education. It does not, however, recessarily reflect the views of that agency.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 710 S.W. Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204

CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
INTRODUCTION	1
SUMMARY OF RESULTS	3
METHODOLOGY	5
Selection of Reviewers	5
Review Schedule	6
RESULTS	8
Target Population	8
Design of the Workshop	12
System Materials	17
The System Trainers	23
Dissemination	26
IN CONCLUSION	29
APPENDIX A: REVIEW GUIDELINES	30

INTRODUCTION

This report describes a formative review of the Interim Version of the "Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving" system, conducted November 19-21, 1975 in Portland, Oregon. The purposes of the review were to obtain expert opinion on the quality of the system's theoretical base and training materials, and to secure recommendations regarding additional developmental efforts. Included in this report are an initial summary of results, a description of methodology, and a section on results that presents the issues raised by staff and reviewers, as well as summaries of discussions and recommendations.

For the past 18 months, staff of the Improving Teaching Competencies Program have been developing the "Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving" system. Five workshops have been conducted for purposes of testing and revising the instructional design and materials. Development is currently in the Interim Milestone. (For a summary of the developmental history and future plans, see the *Pilot Milestone Report*, 1975.)

The system is intended to be a relatively structured, experience-based workshop designed to provide a variety of opportunities to explore situations of social conflict. Participants generally are teachers and/or administrators who meet as strangers or as members of the same organization for a total of six days. The training focus is on helping them to:

1. Realize the inevitability and potential constructiveness of social conflict

2. Understand their own and alternative styles of coping with conflict at the personal, interpersonal and organizational levels

3. Gain some skills in surfacing and dealing with conflict

4. Gain awareness of major social science concepts related to social conflict and negotiative problem solving

5. Experience and understand organizational and interpersonal processes that encourage the use of negotiative problem solving

The system consists of sets of materials for trainers and participants. The 46 papers that comprise the participant materials provide conceptual input, simulation scenarios and forms, group and individual check lists and reflection forms, descriptions of exercises and activity guides. The Trainer Manual includes the participant materials, an instructional design, instructional supplements, handouts and information to be posted on newsprint sheets for participants.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The individual was seen as the major target of change; the system as currently designed could not in itself be effective in promoting general organizational change. The reviewers considered the system to be appropriate for staff development purposes, training school community groups, and inservice and preservice training. It could also be used with college students and faculty members, administrators, citizen groups such as the PTA, education associations, and alternative and parochial schools. Use by other groups would require changes and modifications in the system and/or more reliance on the trainer than was originally intended.

In terms of the workshop design, it seemed to be the general consensus that a six-day residence workshop would be most effective; for reasons of practicality, however, it would be useful to build in the possibility of conducting the workshop in two three-day sessions separated by a period of several days. The reviewers saw the system as quite complex, and throughout the review reinforced the point that there is room for shortening and omitting some activities while replacing and redesigning others in order to strengthen the system without actually increasing its length. In addition, follow-up activities during the school year could help provide participants with the reinforcement and support needed to actually put learnings to use.

The reviewers raised several questions about the system format and materials. They suggested that changes in format could help

decrease participants' experiences of overload, and recommended the development of some additonal materials that could help trainers and participants deal more easily with the complexity of the materials. Although in agreement that the content is relevant to the goals, they urged that the written objectives be more specific.

There was general agreement that more specific directions and help need to be provided for the trainers. This was considered to be one focus of coming development activities. In addition, potential trainers of the system will need a high level of conceptual understanding of the workshop, and a variety of skills that will enable them to maintain their roles while facilitating participants' interactions and learnings.

Finally, the reviewers recommended that the developers carefully evaluate possible dissemination strategies and determine which strategies might be most appropriate for various user groups. Since these groups might view the system's purposes and activities differently, dissemination efforts will need to include accurate descriptions of what the system can and cannot do. Engaging a wider variety of participants in future tests of the system might provide insights into dissemination possibilities.

METHODOLOGY

Staff preparation for the review began in October. Dr. John Lohman and Dr. Gretchen Wilson, developers of the system, met with Gary Milczarek, Program Evaluator, and Debra Stow, Review Coordinator, to develop a pre-review schedule and discuss criteria for the selection of reviewers. During the following weeks, Lab staff revised and edited the system, developed Review Guidelines (see Appendix), selected reviewers and produced a review agenda. Saralie Northam, the Program editor who will be working with the developers during the next fiscal year, was also present for some of the planning and attended the review.

SELECTION OF REVIEWERS

In looking at the kinds of input needed by the developers, it was determined that the reviewers, as a group, should meet the following criteria:

1. Experience in workshop training and design
2. Knowledge of local school district administration
3. Expertise in the theoretical bases of planned change, organizational development, interpersonal relations
4. Knowledge of staff development processes
5. Knowledge of teachers' perspectives on negotiations
6. Participation in a "Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving" workshop
7. Experience in the area of school-community relations
8. Ability to provide input regarding target audiences and possible issues of racism and sexism.

Wilson and Lohman contacted various professional colleagues, educators and organizational development specialists for names of potential reviewers. From the list generated through these contacts, three reviewers were selected:

> Lila Carol, Associate Director, Third Party Network for Urban Education, San Francisco, working with 'boards of education and school administrators,' and organizing and training community advisory groups
>
> Clark Puffer, Executive Director of the Ogden-Weber (Utah) Education Association, and participant in a "Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving" workshop
>
> Orian Worden of Orian Worden Associates, Detroit, Michigan, an organizational development consultant and trainer with National Training Laboratories

About a week before the review, Carol, Puffer and Worden were sent copies of the system materials, an overview summarizing workshop activities, and Review Guidelines. The *Planning Milestone Report* and *Pilot Milestone Report for Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving* were provided as background information. The reviewers were asked to read the materials, keeping in mind the criteria and issues listed in the Review Guidelines.

REVIEW SCHEDULE

The primary concern regarding the review schedule was that it allow ample opportunity for both reviewers and staff to raise and discuss issues as fully as possible within the time available. Thus, the schedule was loosely structured, and open to revisions as needed:

Wednesday, November 19

9:00 p.m. - Informal get acquainted session

Thursday, November 20

8:30 - 9:00 a.m. - Overview of NWREL and ITCP

9:00 - 9:30 a.m. - Share expectations

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. - List issues and prioritize for discussion

10:30 - 12:30 p.m. - Discussion

12:30 LUNCH

2:00 - 4:30 p.m. - Discussion

4:30 - 9:00 p.m. - BREAK

9:00 - 11:00 p.m. - Discussion

Friday, November 21

9:00 - 9:15 a.m. - Review issues to be discussed

9:15 - 12:15 p.m. - Discussion

12:15 - 1:15 p.m. - LUNCH; reviewers record summary statements

1:15 - 4:00 p.m. - Discussion

RESULTS

This section of the report contains summaries of the issues, discussions and recommendations generated during the review. It is organized according to five general sets of issues: the target population, design of the Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving workshop, the system materials, the system trainers, and dissemination.

TARGET POPULATION

Questions about the target population were among the first raised during the review. Areas of discussion included the implicit and expected audiences, the individual vs. the organization as the target of change, and potential effects of the system. Summaries of these discussions are presented below.

Expected and Implicit Target Populations. The principal points examined in this area were the implied target population and the appropriateness of the workshop design and materials for that population. As these points were discussed, two additional concerns emerged:

1. Is the workshop implicitly designed to faciliate more affluent and powerful populations in manipulating and gaining control over others?
2. How readily usable is the workshop to populations of varying race, sex, educational role and socio-economic class?

In providing content for this discussion, Lohman explained that the workshop was developed for teachers, administrators and other professional educators, and paraprofessional staff. The populations used in tests have been primarily college educated, white middle-class teachers, administrators, counselors and research and development personnel.

Carol suggested that there may be many people for whom this package is not appropriate, due to an unwillingness to accept some of the assumptions. As an example of this, Puffer pointed out that those in positions of power, such as administrators, may reject both the advocacy of pluralism and the concept that it is legitimate for conflicting role groups to pursue their own self-interests. Worden went on to say:

> "Assumptions about the model this system represents may be a barrier to its effectiveness with differently educated people...People may be more naturally conflict oriented coming from different populations, and will not accept the invitations your model presents for working in a collaborative, compromise or even negotiating stance. They'd say it's a matter of political organization that is needed to work through in dealing with conflict and it's less important to deal with personal understandings about conflict..."

Moreover, since the workshop is being developed in a particular institutional setting, its applicability and dissemination may be limited to certain target groups generally found in the educational establishment.

The developers responded that their intent has not been to promote a collaborative orientation. Further, they indicated that they would be very dissatisfied with the system if only middle class populations were able to use it. The developers also thought that

there is differential readiness for this kind of workshop among different target populations.

In discussing the question of whether the workshop might be implicitly designed to facilitate affluent and powerful populations, it was concluded that the workshop is potentially both supportive and reforming of the status quo and existing systems. In other words, the workshop can be seen as a tool capable of supporting a number of purposes, but its content and values do not necessarily strengthen powerful and affluent populations.

Regarding the issue of the appropriateness of the materials for different target populations, it was the general consensus that success of the workshop for such groups as central city school boards could depend more on trainer sophistication than on the materials. The reviewers suggested that the language would need to be changed or the content adapted before some groups would be able to relate to the workshop. They also noted that the workshop could be made more appropriate to a wider range of populations through modular packaging. Thus, theory papers and instruments appropriate for particular groups would be packaged separately.

What is the Principal Target of Change? There was general agreement among developers and reviewers that the target of change is the individual. As currently designed, the instructional system cannot be expected to solve organizational problems or bring about organizational change. Such a focus is beyond the scope of what can be accomplished in a six-day structured workshop, and would require additional time, resources and trainer sophistication. It was noted,

however, that the instructional system may be effective as one tool within an organizational change effort.

Both Carol and Puffer spoke to the issue of whether the workshop, then, could be useful to groups from the same school system. Carol noted that from her observation:

> "People are impacting on other people in a system. If you don't give them practice at impacting on people with different kinds of interests, you're not giving them practical experience...Even as a step towards change, unless all of the actors that would be eventually involved in that change are dealing with the same basic notions or understandings, it would be useless."

Puffer suggested that if several people from one institution or community participate in the training, there is the possbility that they can introduce change in that community or institution. Worden, however, noted that such groups receive little opportunity in the workshops to deal specifically and extensively with their backhome situations. Carol suggested that the workshop would have greater value if it allowed participants to work on backhome conflicts and bring about change in their own organizations. She did concur, however, that it would be impractical to make system change a major workshop objective.

Potential Effects. The developers raised the issue of what it means to put subjects "at risk," given USOE's "protection of human subjects" requirement. They explained that the source of such concern is the fact that the workshop can be stressful to some participants.

In the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that through the actions of trainers and the structure of the workshop, participants could be alerted to the possible risks and aided in dealing with any

problems surfaced. Lohman and Wilson added that future development efforts will need to include work on disclaimers and statements of what the package is and what it is not. Worden recommended, for example, specifying that this training program invites self-disclosure, that the workshop operates from an experience-base model and that there are opportunities for participants to experiment with their behavior in ways that are sometimes seen as inappropriate by others.

DESIGN OF THE WORKSHOP

Several issues were raised about the general design of the workshop. These included length of the workshop, availability of participants, the flow of activities, and the possibility of follow-up sessions. Length of the workshop seemed to be of greatest concern to the reviewers, and many of the other issues were raised in that context.

Length of Workshop. Reviewers asked two primary questions regarding the length of the workshop: a) Are the six consecutive days necessary? and b) What is the quality of participants' learnings over six consecutive days? Wilson explained that the workshop has been tested as one of six consecutive days, and in split sessions of two and four days with up to two weeks between sessions. The advantage of the two-four split was that participants had opportunities between sessions to assimilate material and try out new skills and behaviors in conflict situations. The major disadvantage was that with a two-week break, building on the dynamics of early sessions is much more difficult, particularly with the simulations that continue over a period of several days.

A secondary issue here was the fatigue factor on the part of participants during a 6 day workshop. Lohman commented:

> "There's fatigue, but at the same time, people get involved in these experiences, and there's enough variety in kinds of activities that we've had a very low dropout rate. My sense is people are working during most of it; once in a while they tune out, and take care of themselves that way."

Northam, who attended a two-four split workshop, reported that during the four-day break, she was interested in re-reading the material presented in the initial two days, "more than I would have before or after a concentrated period of time."

This led to a discussion of how participants might use breaks. Carol, for example, suggested the possibility of assigning "homework" for that time. Puffer pointed out, however, that dealing with a backhome situation could complicate re-orientation of participants to the workshop agenda. Worden suggested that some participants might even drop out of a split workshop before the second part, because the design may not have allowed them to gain a sense of value or closure on the experience. The amount of difficulty created by such factors would depend in part on the length of the break, and redesigning that would need to occur for the opening session of the second part of the workshop.

Availability of Participants. As secondary issues to the concern with the length of the workshop, Carol raised the questions of cost and availability of participants during the school year. It was explained that while the major cost is participants' time, the workshop could be scheduled to include a weekend, thus reducing the number

of working days used to four. Puffer suggested that from an administrative perspective, an entire week of release time could be preferable to using parts of two different weeks. He added:

> "I think it's all really good, powerful stuff. I like the experience level, the emotional level, the intellectual level that you get into with it. But I agree that there ought to be a break; so the people using it would have the option of 3-3, 2-4, or 6-7."

It was agreed that availability of school board and community members might prove to be a more serious issue. Lohman commented that in terms of practicalities, a 3-3 split might be the preferred mode. In view of this possibility, Worden suggested that the first three days of the workshop be designed as self-contained and autonomous; the second part might then follow in such a way that groups of participants could elect to attent Part A or Part B or both. With this option, Part A could focus on personal awareness and consciousness raising experiences related to conflict, and Part B could focus on the application of workshop learnings to situations likely to be encountered by participants.

Flow of Activities. The reviewers expressed some concern about the general flow of activities, and whether the conceptual input and experiential sessions logically follow and build on each other. The developers explained that some of the questions about flow arise from the fact that the trainers' explanations and inputs that usually cover apparent gaps are not included in the written materials.

Worden suggested that the current design may be a little overstructured and tight and that perhaps more time for breaks and

informal debriefings should be considered. There were also suggestions that the developers consider the total hours of training in light of creating a less rigorous schedule. For example, beginning earlier on some mornings would allow for a 2-hour break during the day; shortening the NOG exercise would increase design flexibility.

Carol made an additional suggestion that the trainers take a more active role in reading sessions, where the material being presented is complex. The participants could read a section of material and discuss it before reading the rest. Participants' questions and issues with the material could then be discussed after completion of the reading and before moving into the related experiential session. It was pointed out by the developers, however, that conceptual clarity is not necessarily expected following a reading session; rather, the clarity develops as participants debrief their experiences in related activities in terms of the reading material.

Puffer brought up another facet of pace and design, based on his own experience with the workshop. He pointed out that some sessions, and particularly those involving negotiations, sometimes need to be extended because of the nature of the issues and participants' involvement in them. Wilson explained that the trainers have been able to accommodate to such needs when appropriate, and that the workshop does not necessarily operate as tightly as it appears on paper. It was suggested that participants may be able to self-manage some blocks of time.

Worden expanded the discussion of pace:

> "...the number of exercises that are so involving at the experiential level, make it difficult for people to disengage by the clock, which is required

> to get through the program...The other thing is, you start off at a pretty good speed, which assumes people will be able to start cold and very fast."

Lohman explained that one of the dynamics is that many participants experience a great deal of anxiety coming into a workshop on conflict: "Am I going to be able to take it?"; "Can I make it?" The developers have found that by engaging participants in activities fairly early in the workshop, some of the anxiety is relieved. In addition, some of the scheduled activities are more passive in nature, and provide a cushion following that initial acceleration.

Followup Activities. In reviewing the issue of length, Carol asked about the possibility of developing some follow-up activities. She noted that the repetition and reinforcement needed for learning are missing in "one-shot" workshops such as this. Furthermore, followup or refresher activities would:

> "...establish an attitude with participants such that they don't think they're experts after the six days. Maybe it would even be something they would carry on themselves without the trainer, especially if you use people from the same setting as participants in local activities."

Ideally, followup activities would occur several times during the course of the school year. They would have the added value of providing time for expanded explanations of materials now crowded into the 6 day schedule. The developers expressed a desire to plan or conduct followup sessions, but noted that budgeting constraints would probably preclude their doing so.

SYSTEM MATERIALS

Questions about the system materials focus on three areas: amount of materials, the specificity of written objectives, and the language and complexity of theoretical input. Below are summaries of discussions of these questions and of recommendations for changes in the materials.

Format and Amount of Materials. One primary concern regarding materials was whether participants would be able to read and understand the amount of input provided by 46 papers within six workshop days. All three reviewers expressed doubts about this. During the discussion, two general questions emerged:

1. What basic concepts do participants need as tools for gaining an intellectual grasp of their experiences in the exercises?

2. Can there be a diverseness in the materials such that participants could read and master them according to their own readiness to do so?

There was general agreement that the concepts presented in the materials are relevant to the goals and objectives of the system. However, reviewers felt that the time scheduled for reading could be adjusted to more appropriately match the depth of the material being presented. It was also suggested that the developers consider assigning some of the reading as "homework" to be done individually.

Rather than eliminate major portions of the material, it was thought that changes in format and presentation could serve to decrease participants' experiences of overload. Worden suggested creating a book of reading materials that participants could use when they felt

the need for conceptual clarity. Carol's suggestion involved a different time frame:

> "I think all of these pieces are important if you're trying to do more than just have people understand something...How could it (the workshop) be divided up or even extended, so reading can be done in between?"

Puffer raised as an alternative the idea of using slides, transparencies and cassette tapes to introduce concepts and augment readings and discussions. The tapes could provide some variety in presentation, bring key points into sharper focus, provide uniformity once the system is put to use by a variety of trainers. They might also help reduce the amount of conceptual material missed by participants. To illustrate the point, he related an experience he had with an exercise in which participants were asked to respond to hypothetical situations according to concepts presented in a theory paper:

> "...those with familiarity with the concepts had to sort of bring the others in their group up-to-date. If there wasn't anyone with familiarity, it was just sort of skipped over."

The idea of using different media raised two additional issues. The first was that the Program budget and time lines might constrain the development of these additonal materials. The second, as Northam pointed out, is that publishers are reluctant to handle such packages, due to production costs and difficulties in controlling the duplicating of copyrighted materials. Puffer replied that if tapes or slides were attached to each trainer manual, there would be no options on whether to buy them.

Finally, two other suggestions were made regarding the reduction of overload. The reviewers agreed that reducing the complexity of some of the materials would help, and that rearranging some of the times for conceptual input would mean less loss of understanding due to fatigue. Northam corroborated this last point from her experience with the system:

> "The question with that (paper) is that coming at the end of the first day, my mind simply wouldn't pick up this kind of information. So placing it at another point in the workshop might help some."

Specificity of Written Objectives. In discussing the stated goals and objectives of the workshop, objections were raised about the use of the word "skills." The objections focused specifically on two of the goals:

Acquiring skills in a negotiative problem solving model

Acquiring skills in using power

As Carol asked, "How can anyone become a skilled negotiator in six days?" Wilson agreed that the wording should be changed so that proficiency is not implied. She pointed out that the workshop allows for exposure to and experience in the use of some negotiating skills. It was agreed that the two goals should be restated as follows:

Acquiring experience in the use of some skills in a negotiative problem solving model

Acquiring experience in the uses of different forms of power

This raised a larger issue:

> Should the level of specificity be increased for the workshop objectives and for the skills that are addressed by the workshop? For example, should negotiation skills be spelled out more specifically?

During the ensuing discussion, attention was called to the Negotiations Check Lists that appear in various forms throughout the materials. The lists are designed to help participants assess their skills and reflect on their actions in the simulations. It was pointed out that the list moves from an "I" focus to a "we" focus, implying that participants are expected to have acquired skills in group process in previous exercises. Thus, the system addresses skills at the intergroup, intragroup, interperson and intraperson levels. Lohman responded that the lists represent "as far as we've gone" in the level of specificity of skills and knowledge, and that areas covered by the check lists imply additional groups of skills. Both Worden and Carol saw the check lists as representing a summary of "the system," and concurred on the need for greater clarity.

Moving to a somewhat different focus, Worden suggested that participants will often have taken other training that provided some of the more specific skills addressed in this workshop. He suggested that the workshop build on the assumption that participants had acquired expertise in communication skills, for example, and that the developers be quite specific and present with clear definitions the skill areas and skill mixes required for the workshop. Carol questioned whether there might even be some pre-assessment of the competency levels of participants in some of the prerequisite areas.

Lohman affirmed that there are sets of communication and interpersonal skills that are critical for engaging in negotiations. However, there is no empirical evidence that participants need these skills to enter the workshop. Wilson noted that there may be some

content and skills elements that are simply irrelevant to certain populations that could be handled through modular packaging.

Worden suggested that short of making participation in other workshops a prerequisite, the developers consider a procedure that is sometimes used in individually guided instruction: participants could be directed to specific sections of materials, according to the skills or conceptual inputs needed. Such options could be provided by the trainer when designing a specific workshop, or could be built into the materials so that decision points would automatically occur.

Language and Complexity. Several points were raised regarding the interrelated issues of the complexity of concepts presented and the clarity of language used. Reviewer comments focused on the amount of precision necessary, and the resulting implications around design:

> "I think the more precise and concrete, the better. It's complex enough in terms of interaction, without precision. In Paper 12, the words are too complex. Types and levels and categories of social conflict--I'm not sure participants would read and understand that in a way that would make sense to them. It's kind of like a seminar paper for a bunch of professionals to react to." (Worden)

> "I have the same sense, especially when checking how much time is allowed for them to read it. And also that this would require a great deal of work with the trainer." (Carol)

It was also noted that in some places different words are used interchangeably, which could be confusing for participants.

The reviewers expressed concern that distinctions among key points and concepts be made clear. In addition, suggestions were made for breaking some of the materials down into "more digestible components" as a way of handling the more complex input. Puffer

again noted that tapes and/or slides might reduce complexity if used at the appropriate times. For example, participants might first read a paper and then discuss it while viewing a slide that shows the interrelated concepts on a matrix.

Milczarek pointed out that there might be a positive side to the complexity of the workshop, in that participants have the opportunity to pursue their own learning goals and to enter at different levels of readiness for the material. This would argue against a drastic simplification of the workshop. Worden supported maintaining much of the complexity and richness of the workshop. However, he noted that due to the complexity and richness, substantial time is needed for debriefing and personal integration of concepts and experiences. Therefore, developers may want to consider the possibility of having participants do the debriefing and personal integration on their own time, reserving workshop time for skill building.

An area in which there was some disagreement among reviewers was in the complexity of the scoring form for the NOG simulation. Carol and Worden were strongly in favor of simplifying the form and reducing the amount of mathematical computation required. Puffer, however, pointed out that the current form allows participants to deal with another aspect of social conflict situations, i.e., how the parties to a conflict handle the presence or absence of different competencies among various group members.

All three reviewers thought that some additional items could be developed to help both trainers and participants deal with the

complexity of the materials. These included:

1. A matrix showing the various elements of the system. This would include a correlation of goals and objectives to the skills and conditions necessary for the use of negotiative problem solving. The matrix would help provide trainers and participants with a comprehensive sense of the system, and serve as a reference sheet so that searching through all of the materials in order to find one item would be unnecessary.

2. A summary of the system components in the form of a checklist. This would provide participants with a paper that says, "this is what we did."

3. A reference list of topics for trainers. Some materials are used to emphasize and reinforce points made during various exercises. A list of these topics and where they appear would facilitate trainers' work with the participants.

THE SYSTEM TRAINERS

Both developers and reviewers raised issues about the potential trainers of the system. As discussion progressed, two specific issues --trainer qualifications and roles--were brought into focus.

Trainer Qualifications. Developers and reviewers summarized some of the qualifications that might apply to a profile for workshop trainers:

1. They should be able to comprehend the conflict and power dynamics as they occur in workshop activities.

2. They need some process and interpersonal communications skills for dealing with power and conflict.

3. They need an understanding of the conflict and power dynamics underlying the workshop in order to facilitate participants' use of a negotiative problem-solving model, rather than the use of a collaborative approach.

4. They should be committed to the model and its underlying values.

5. They must be able to process the workshop, and understand how participants gain from use of an experiential model

6. They need a sensitivity to the fact that participants can have high anxiety levels in the workshop. If necessary, they should be able to intervene to provide alternative experiences or help participants protect themselves.

7. They must be able to keep separate the various roles they are required to take.

In response to questions from reviewers, Wilson and Lohman explained that the initial idea regarding leadership was to use individuals who had participated in a Conflict workshop and had then served as co-trainers of the system. Reviewers, however, questioned this procedure. Carol thought the trainer would have to be an extremely capable and well prepared person, and that such "turnaround" training would not be appropriate. It was further noted that turnaround leadership might result in superficial kinds of understandings and experiences, and could even lead to a breakdown of the workshop should the trainer not have the understanding and skill needed to maintain control of events. The reviewers suggested augmenting trainer preparation by providing several co-training experiences, and including some method for evaluating trainers' performances.

In a somewhat different approach, Worden asked how the workshop would look on a dimension of trainer-free to trainer-dependent. He pointed out that there are no shortcuts in providing participants with high quality experiences, and that such experiences require highly qualified and competent trainers. One way of approaching the design of the workshop in light of this might be to make the system less dependent on the trainer and therefore more stable against the influence of the trainer.

Trainer Roles. Lohman expressed a concern that the trainer qualifications not be set so high that the size of the trainer population becomes overly restricted, thus limiting mass dissemination of the training system. One approach to this could be to simplify the trainer's role in the workshop. For example, by providing a structure that allows participants to debrief their own workshop experiences, it would be possible to avoid a great deal of reliance on trainer expertise.

Continuing with the topic of debriefing as it relates to trainer roles, Lohman pointed out the distinction between workshops where trust is built consciously, as opposed to this workshop where trust is not always appropriate. Worden suggested that the developers be very clear about the mode in which trainers of this workshop operate, whether it be a debriefing trust mode or a political negotiation mode. Further, trainers should attempt to explicate that for participants and legitimize participants' resistance to the debriefing.

Discussion of trainer-participant relationships and possibilities for debriefing raised additional questions:

1. What further development work might be done to help trainers' efforts to separate participants' feelings toward the trainers from that conflict which is a part of the design?

2. How should the workshop deal with the conflict generated by trainer behavior and intervention, given the built-in design constraints?

Puffer suggested altering some of the presentation styles:

> "I can see some different methods being utilized rather than the trainers explaining. Would you see some advantages in having the trainers in a different role and having a neutral source, like a tape?...(this would) initiate a kind of outside look and put the trainers off the spot."

Finally, a question was raised about the number of trainers necessary for a workshop. Puffer suggested that one trainer might be able to handle a small group of eighteen participants. Others, however, felt that two would be required because of the complex nature of the workshop, the difficulty of conducting the numerous activities, preparing for coming activities, and trainers' own needs for support.

DISSEMINATION

Issues of dissemination of the system focused in two areas: a) identification of participants for workshops being conducted in the development phase; and b) dissemination strategies and the relative involvement of various role groups once development is complete.

Identification of Participants. The developers described the role of the Program's Field Relations Unit, pointing out that identification of sites and participants for field testing has occurred primarily as a result of that unit's work with school district management personnel. Puffer's reaction to this process framed the issue:

> "I don't think that identification should come from a particular segment. It can be just as dangerous for the union or the association people as it would be for the administration to select those people. Both administration and association should select and be committed to doing it, so that one party wouldn't be perceived as using it as a tool against the other."

There was general agreement by both reviewers and developers that the identification process should be closely examined, both in terms of who does the identifying, and in insuring that developers have a variety of populations with which to test the system.

Dissemination Strategies. As the discussion moved to the broader area of dissemination of the completed package, the developers explained that the Laboratory's policy on dissemination is in process of being clarified. To date, publishers have handled essentially all dissemination and the Laboratory's involvement has been minimal; however, the complexity of products is increasing, and there may in the future be increased Lab involvement in dissemination of these systems. In addition, the Program in considering providing a technical service function which might involve Program staff in dissemination and training.

One question raised was what interests would be served by releasing and disseminating the workshop according to methods used previously. Carol and Puffer were of the opinion that if the workshop is used by those in administrative roles, it may not filter down to lower status role groups; if it were to reach lower status role groups, there could be issues of resistance to and acceptance of the materials. This would have implications for the dissemination strategy, in that information would have to be provided on how the training is introduced to different role groups for different purposes. It was also pointed out that some marketing strategies may require specific knowledge of different metropolitan areas--particularly political structures for education--in order to make appropriate entry into various groups and ascertain which combinations of role groups would be most appropriate for training.

Continuing with the discussion, Worden stressed the value issues involved in determining the marketing strategy: Given the

Lab's history, should this package be marketed in ways that other systems have? If so, it is assumed that this package fits into the value framework of all other Lab products. In other words, there is an issue of internal consistency between the dissemination process and the value assumptions of the training.

It became apparent to the reviewers and developers that there is a crucial need for participants' expectations about the workshop to be clarified through pretraining information or through introductory materials in the workshop. While developers may not have control over the marketing process, they do have control over the information describing the system, its purposes and how to use it. If, i example, the message to administrators is, "this package will sharpen conflict in your system, but," they won't hear anything behind the "but"; all they will hear is that the system will sharpen conflict.

Thus, a Program task is to describe what the package does, in a way that is consistent with the purposes of the system and yet allows the various target groups to understand what is intended. The developers suggested that it may be impossible to provide such a message on a piece of paper, and that other strategies, such as a Program technical assistance service, might be necessary.

IN CONCLUSION

The reviewers expressed very positive feelings about the system in general and the review process. They indicated interest in participating in future workshops and being informed of on-going developmental efforts. The developers felt that the review was very helpful in terms of planning future directions, analyzing some difficult issues, and exploring possible modifications in the system.

Appendix A:

REVIEW GUIDELINES

The purpose of this review is to obtain expert opinion about the quality of certain aspects of the instructional system, Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving, and to secure recommendations for their improvement. This information will be used primarily by the developers to revise the training materials but will also be summarized as part of a technical report to the National Institute of Education.

Please review the accompanying Participant Materials, Instructional Design and Orientation Paper for the Social Conflict and Negotiative Problem Solving Workshop. The Planning Milestone Report and Pilot Milestone Report have also been included as supplementary information.

A period of time will be scheduled toward the end of the review conference for you to write a summary of your reactions and recommendations. We would like your summary to address the following areas: a) the rationale, goals and objectives of the workshop, b) the instructional content, c) the instructional procedures, and d) recommendations concerning several important issues related to training and disseminating the workshop. A number of evaluation criteria have been provided below which you may find helpful as you review the materials. These are criteria that may be applied in the final evaluation of the training program. Our interest at this time is in identifying important weaknesses so please don't feel that you need to systematically address each criterion.

Some of the training and dissemination issues for which we need additional input are also summarized below.

1. Criteria for reviewing the workshop rationale, goals and objectives.

   a. Clarity

   b. Conceptual integrity

   c. Social significance (for example, does the training address important social problems of our time?)

   d. Explicitness of claims and disclaimers (for example, is more claimed than can be reasonably expected?)

   e. Completeness (for example, would you recommend additional objectives?)

2. Criteria for reviewing the instructional content.

   a. Conceptual adequacy

   b. Theoretical significance (for example, are the concepts and principles consistent with current theory?)

   c. Practical significance (for example, do the skills and concepts offer practical help for people in conflict situations?)

   d. Clarity of definition and presentation

   e. Appropriate emphasis of content elements

   f. Adequate integration of content elements

   g. Parsimony

   h. Completeness

   i. Likely (adequate) to meet objectives

   j. Lack of cultural biases

3. Criteria for reviewing the instructional procedures.

   a. Appropriateness for audience

   b. Appropriateness for goals and objectives

c. Appropriateness for instructional content

d. Clarity

e. Completeness

Issues

1. Training issues and problems

   a. Trainer qualifications

   b. Trainer role

   c. Identification, recruitment of trainers

   d. Training, preparation of trainers

2. Dissemination issues and problems

   a. Dissemination strategies

   b. Target populations

   c. Interests served by this system

   d. Potential harmfulness

   e. Implicit values and orientations